

REMARKS

This Amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action mailed on January 23, 2003. The Abstract and claim 8 have been amended and claims 1-18 remain pending in the present application. In view of the foregoing amendments, as well as the following remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in complete condition for allowance and request reconsideration of the application in this regard.

Claims 1-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Lamb et al., U.S. Design Patent No. D420,225 and further as being anticipated by Nordstrom et al., U.S. Design Patent No. D347,946. Claims 1-2, 4-10 and 12-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Heubeck, U.S. Patent No. 3,866,973. Lastly, claims 3, 11 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Heubeck. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for the reasons set forth below and request that the rejections be withdrawn.

In particular, Applicants have amended independent claim 8 to recite that the pair of arm rests are rigidly connected to the back section for movement with the back section between the generally upright position and the reclined position. Each of original claims 1 and 16, and amended independent claim 8, recite that the pair of arm rests are rigidly connected to the back section (claims 1 and 8) or to the back frame (claim 16). Applicants respectfully submit that this claimed feature is not taught or suggested by the prior art of record.

In particular, in the dental chair of Lamb et al., the arm rests are mounted to pivot relative to the back section as is evident from the elongated arm rest linkage which extends laterally through the back section to pivotally support the arm rests as shown in Figs. 3 and 5.

In the dental chair of Nordstrom et al., the arm rests are not rigidly connected to the back section as claimed by Applicants. Rather, it appears that the arm rests are pivotally mounted to the yoke members as shown in Figs. 1-4, and it appears that the arm rests raise upwardly when the back rest is lowered to the recline position as shown in Fig. 5. Clearly, the arm rests move relative to the back rest as the back rest moves between the generally upright and reclined positions so that it is evident that the pair of arm rests are not rigidly connected to the back section as claimed by Applicants.

Lastly, in the dental chair of Heubeck, it is clear that the arm rests (11) are mounted to pivot relative to the back section (4) about pivotal connections (10).

Applicants respectfully submit that the prior art of record fails to teach or suggest Applicants' invention wherein the pair of arm rests are rigidly connected to the back section as claimed. Applicants' recited arm rest and back rest structure provides a significant advantage which is not taught or suggested by the prior art of record. As fully described in Applicants' disclosure, the examination chair of the present invention provides a patient with unobstructed entry into or exit from the chair in the generally upright patient entry/exit position and a natural, relaxed and comfortable support in the reclined patient examination and treatment position. This

is accomplished through the rigid connection of the pair of arm rests to the back section without the need for pivotal connections between the arm rests and the back section as taught in the prior art of record.

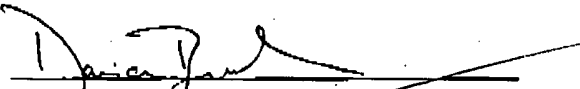
Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that each of independent claims 1, 8 and 16 is allowable over the prior art of record, and respectfully request that the rejections of these claims be withdrawn. Moreover, as claims 2-7, 9-15 and 17-18 depend from allowable independent claims 1, 8 and 16, respectively, and further as each of these claims recites a combination of elements not taught or suggested by the prior art of record, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are allowable as well.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing response including the amendments and remarks, this application is submitted to be in complete condition for allowance and early notice to this affect is earnestly solicited. If there is any issue that remains which may be resolved by telephone conference, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned in order to resolve the same and expedite the allowance of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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